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ARTICLE

On Interrogative Inquiries Without Suspended Judgement and Doxastic Neutrality

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Abstract

It is a widespread idea that suspended judgement implies a state of doxastic neutrality. Jane Friedman has recently claimed that while inquiring into a given question, one suspends one's judgement on it. Jointly considered, the previous claims imply that one is in a state of doxastic neutrality about a given question while inquiring into it. In this article, I explore the leading cases against Friedman's perspective, arguing that it is debatable whether they exhibit inquiries into questions without doxastic neutrality. However, I will propose the possibility of "explorative disconfirmation inquiries" to show that doxastically non-neutral inquiries do exist.

Résumé

L'idée selon laquelle la suspension du jugement implique un état de neutralité doxastique est largement répandue. Jane Friedman a récemment soutenu que lorsque l'on enquête sur une question, on suspend notre jugement sur celle-ci. Considérées conjointement, ces deux affirmations impliquent que l'on est dans un état de neutralité doxastique concernant une question donnée lorsque l'on enquête sur cette question. Dans cet article, j'examine les principaux cas qui vont à l'encontre de la perspective de Friedman, en soutenant qu'il est discutable qu'ils exemplifient des enquêtes sur des questions où la neutralité doxastique est absente. Toutefois, je proposerai la possibilité d'« enquêtes d'infirmation exploratoires » afin de montrer que des enquêtes doxastiquement non-neutres existent bel et bien.

Keywords: suspension of judgement; doxastic neutrality; interrogative inquiries; propositional inquiries; occurrent belief

1. Introduction

When confronted with questions, we can manifest our beliefs or disbeliefs. For example, if one were asked, "Does God exist?," one could answer: "I believe it does" or "I do not believe it does." Namely, by giving these answers, one can express one's theist or atheist stance toward God's existence. However, one can even manifest a *third doxastic stance* (Rosenkranz, 2007) and answer: "I can't say. I suspend my judgement about this question." In this case, by providing a *can't-say answer*, one

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represents oneself as an agnostic (Ferrari & Incurvati, 2022). In other words, the example of God's existence shows us that when confronted with questions, we can manifest our beliefs or disbeliefs but also a third doxastic stance that we call "suspension of judgement."[1]

Recently, epistemologists have given a lot of attention to suspended judgement (Archer, 2019, 2022; Crawford, 2022; Ferrari & Incurvati, 2022; Friedman, 2013, 2017, Forthcoming; Lord, 2020; Lord & Sylvan, 2021, Forthcoming; Masny, 2020; McGrath, 2021; Raleigh, 2021; Sturgeon, 2020; Wagner, 2022). Notably, a widespread idea we can find in the literature is that what we call "suspension of judgement" implies a *state of doxastic neutrality* in which one has neither belief nor disbelief about a particular issue (Bergmann, 2005; Crawford, 2022; Crawford, 2004; Hájek, 1998; Masny, 2020; Raleigh, 2021; van Fraassen, 1998; Wagner, 2022; Wedgwood, 2002). For example, considering the previous question of God's existence, if one suspends one's judgement about God's existence, one would be in a doxastic condition in which one neither believes nor disbelieves that God exists. Generalising this perspective, we are presented with the intuitive idea that when one suspends one's judgement about a given question Q, one is in a state of doxastic neutrality in which one has neither belief nor disbelief about which of the possible complete answers A to Q is true.[2]

Jane Friedman (2017, 2019a, Forthcoming) has strictly tied suspended judgement to inquiry. She argues that any agent inquiring into a given question suspends her judgement about it. To sustain this position, she starts by noting the existence of a *normative incompatibility* between knowledge and inquiry. For example, take the case where I know that Joe Biden is the actual president of the United States. However, despite this knowledge, imagine that I inquire into the question, "Who is the actual president of the United States?" We can see that something fishy is going on in this case. Indeed, it is intuitive to think that I should not inquire into the previous question, given my already available knowledge. A common reaction to my inquiry might be: "Why should you inquire into that question if you already know the answer?" Friedman argues that this normative incompatibility exists just because inquiry implies suspension of judgement, which is *incoherent* with the belief one's knowledge implies. Based on this, Friedman explains and concludes that the following norm guides our inquiries: One ought not to inquire into a given question

[1] In this article, I will use the terms "doxastic stance" and "doxastic state" as synonyms to refer to belief, disbelief, and suspended judgement.

[2] To my knowledge, Friedman (2013, 2017) is the only philosopher who expressly rebuts the necessity of doxastic neutrality for suspended judgement. By appealing to the idea that our minds are fragmented, she says that we can suspend and believe at the same time by having two conflicting and incoherent doxastic databases. For example, I might suspend my judgement about whether God exists in one fragment of my mind but believe that God exists in another fragment. However, I do not think that these considerations prove that we can suspend our judgement without being doxastically neutral. Indeed, it is a standard in the theory of the fragmented mind that even if our doxastic fragments might not be deductively closed and coherent if taken all together, they are so if considered singularly (Borgoni et al., 2021). This implies that it is possible to believe p in one fragment and suspend judgement about p in another. However, by definition, it would be impossible to suspend and believe in the same fragment because, otherwise, one would have an incoherent doxastic fragment. Therefore, appealing to the fragmented mind does not show per se that suspended judgement does not require doxastic neutrality. Rather, it reaffirms this claim.

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when one knows the answer because, otherwise, one would be in an incoherent doxastic situation.[3]

It is important to note that if we join the initial perspective about suspended judgement as a state of doxastic neutrality with Friedman's perspective, an interesting philosophical claim follows: If one inquires into a given question *Q*, one is in a state of doxastic neutrality in which one has neither belief nor disbelief about which of the possible complete answers *A* to *Q* is true. This can be derived from the following reasoning:

1) There is a third doxastic stance we call "suspension of judgement." If one suspends one's judgement about a given question *Q*, one is in a state of doxastic neutrality in which one has neither belief nor disbelief about which of the possible complete answers *A* to *Q* is true.
2) If one is inquiring into a given question *Q*, one suspends one's judgement about *Q*.
   Therefore,
3) If one is inquiring into question *Q*, one is in a state of doxastic neutrality in which one has neither belief nor disbelief about which of the possible complete answers *A* to *Q* is true. [1, 2, transitivity of implication]

Conclusion 3) intuitively states that, for example, if I inquired into the existence of God, I would have a form of doxastic neutrality about the two possible answers, "Yes, it does" or "No, it doesn't." I would be in a doxastic state in which I neither believe nor disbelieve one of them.

Despite this intuitive conclusion, the primary aim of this article will be to show that the doxastic neutrality previously described and suspension of judgement are not necessary to inquire into a given question. Interrogative inquiries without doxastic neutrality and suspended judgement do exist. In Section 2, I will first examine some of the leading cases philosophers have offered against Friedman's perspective, and I will argue that it is debatable whether they can demonstrate inquiries into questions without suspension of judgement and doxastic neutrality. However, in Section 3, considering the problem of the previous cases, I will propose the possibility of investigations that I name "explorative disconfirmation inquiries" to show that Friedman's claim 2) is indeed wrong and that doxastically non-neutral interrogative inquiries do exist.

2. Confirmation Inquiries, the Middle Stage of Inquiry, and Retrieving One's Knowledge: Doxastically Non-Neutral Inquiries Into Questions?

2.1. Confirmation Inquiries About Our Beliefs and Knowledge: Interrogative Investigations?

Recently, some philosophers have highlighted the existence of inquiries that can be categorised under the label of "confirmation inquiries." They are investigations in

[3] Notably, Friedman (2019b) argues for an even stronger norm of inquiry: We ought not to inquire into a given question and believe its answer.

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which one aims to confirm or further confirm the truth of a certain proposition p for which one already has a *doxastic commitment* like belief (Archer, 2021; Feldman & Conee, 2018; Millson, 2020) or an *epistemic stance* like knowledge (Archer, 2021; Falbo, 2021, 2023; Raleigh, 2021; Woodard, 2021, Forthcoming). Specifically, when we carry out this type of inquiry, we seek evidence that confirms or further confirms our already available doxastic commitments or epistemic states. The question I want to explore in this subsection is whether the confirmation inquiries that aim to confirm one's beliefs or knowledge can be doxastically non-neutral inquiries into questions.

Starting with confirmation inquiries about one's knowledge, Avery Archer (2021), Arianna Falbo (2021, 2023), Thomas Raleigh (2021), and Elise Woodard (2021, Forthcoming) propose cases in which one seeks to further confirm one's knowledge that p to argue against Friedman's claim 2) or the normative thesis that one ought not to inquire into a given question when one believes or knows its answer. The scenarios they offer are all similar in structure: There is a subject who knows a given proposition p and legitimately seeks evidence to further confirm her knowledge and acquire a *stronger* epistemic stance toward p.

For the sake of brevity, I will present and discuss only two cases, the first is adapted from Falbo (2021, 2023) and the second is from Woodard:

> EXPERT SURGEON
> Fatima is an expert surgeon scheduled to perform an operation and she has spent the morning carefully studying her patient's file: She knows that the left kidney needs to be removed. However, a few hours before the surgery, she thinks that, despite her knowledge, she will double check the patient's file one last time — just to be sure. She walks into a nearby office where her trusted resident is studying the patient's file and asks him to confirm which kidney needs to be removed. He confirms that it is the left kidney.

> EXPERT STUDENT
> **Riley** is taking an algebra exam that is not multiple choice. One of the questions asks one to solve for x. Riley is quite skilled at these problems, and when they solve for x, they get the answer $x = 15$. *They thereby come to know that* $x = 15$. After finishing the exam, Riley goes back to check their work. To do so, they plug 15 in for x in the initial equation and confirm that they got the right answer. In doing this, (c) Riley becomes more confident that $x = 15$. (Woodard, Forthcoming, p. 7)

In Falbo's and Woodard's description of EXPERT SURGEON and EXPERT STUDENT, Fatima's and Riley's seeking confirmation of their knowledge intuitively shows that they can legitimately inquire into the questions of whether the left kidney needs to be removed and whether $x = 15$ despite their already available knowledge. Namely, they show that Friedman's normative stance is wrong. However, it is notable that if this is true, then EXPERT SURGEON and EXPERT STUDENT also represent scenarios in which one can inquire into a given question without suspending one's judgement about it and without being doxastically neutral toward the set of possible complete answers. Namely, they represent counterexamples to 2) and 3).

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However, I note that this reading of EXPERT SURGEON and EXPERT STUDENT proposed to argue against Friedman's normative claim and 2) is undermined by Falbo's and Woodard's own theorising about confirmation inquiries. Indeed, they both specify that seeking confirmation of propositions one knows to be true can just be a *propositional attitude* rather than representing an *interrogative attitude*. Namely, when one seeks confirmation of one's knowledge, one can seek *to confirm that p is true* while not inquiring into the question of *whether p is true*. Indeed, as Falbo writes about EXPERT SURGEON, since Fatima already knows that the left kidney needs to be removed, she *needs not* be wondering about the question Q_1: "Does the left kidney need to be removed?" Rather, she might just seek to confirm the proposition she knows to be true: She might just seek to confirm that the left kidney needs to be removed when she asks her question of her resident. The same description applies to EXPERT STUDENT. Given that Riley already knows that $x = 15$, they need not be wondering about the question to Q_2: "Is $x = 15$?" They might just seek to confirm that $x = 15$ when they plug 15 in for x in the initial equation.

Following this intuitive possibility, EXPERT SURGEON and EXPERT STUDENT do not *unambiguously* and *clearly* show scenarios in which one is inquiring into a given question despite one's knowledge of the answer. Rather, following Falbo's and Woodard's caveat, they could intuitively show that the confirmation inquiries we make to confirm our knowledge can be considered *non-interrogative investigations*: When one seeks to confirm a proposition p one knows to be true, one can be taken as not inquiring into the question of whether p. Namely, when one seeks to confirm a proposition p one knows to be true, one can just be taken as seeking to confirm that p is true rather than as inquiring into whether p is true. Hence, from a philosophical point of view, Falbo's and Woodard's caveat shows that whether confirmation inquiries about one's knowledge can really be interrogative investigations are something that should be investigated further rather than presupposed in the theory of inquiry: It is more of an open than a *settled question*. Given this, it follows that it is also an open question whether the confirmation inquiries we make to confirm our knowledge can really be doxastically non-neutral interrogative inquiries in which we do not suspend our judgement.

What about confirmation inquiries we make to confirm our beliefs? Can they be interrogative and doxastically non-neutral? Archer (2021) and Richard Feldman and Earl Conee (2018) have provided some cases in which one is seeking confirmation of one's belief to achieve a higher epistemic stance, and they hold that the scenarios provided speak against Friedman's claim 2) or the normative thesis that one ought not to inquire into a given question if one already believes its answer. Namely, they show that it is both normatively and metaphysically possible to inquire into a given question while believing its answer. Here are the example cases:

> TAX RETURN
> Upon completing her tax returns, Carla believes fairly confidently that a small refund is due. However, she nevertheless decides to double check or ask another person to review the return just to be sure.[4]

[4] This case is adapted from Feldman and Conee (2018).

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> EXTRATERRESTRIAL ENTHUSIAST
> Myles believes that there is extraterrestrial life based on the following considerations: the five elements necessary for life also happen to be the most common in the universe, the vastness of the universe offers numerous opportunities for life to evolve, and earth is unexceptional when compared to the billions of other earth-like planets. However, while Myles takes these considerations to be enough to make his belief justified, he does not take it to be enough to ground knowledge. In order to have knowledge that there is extraterrestrial life, Myles believes he would either need to see direct evidence of extraterrestrial life (like fossils or actual life forms) or receive reliable testimony from someone who has observed such direct evidence. Since Myles has not received any reliable testimony on this point, when he is offered the opportunity to join a scientific expedition in search of direct evidence of extraterrestrial life, he jumps at the opportunity to acquire the kind of evidence that would elevate his (justified) belief to the status of knowledge. (Archer, 2021, pp. 109–110)

On the one hand, following Feldman and Conee (2018), TAX RETURN shows that Carla can inquire into the question Q_3, "Is a tax refund due?," despite believing fairly confidently that the answer is "Yes, it is." On the other hand, following Archer (2021), EXTRATERRESTRIAL ENTHUSIAST shows that Myles can inquire into the question Q_4, "Does extraterrestrial life exist?," despite believing in a justified way the answer "Yes, it does." Clearly, if these readings of TAX RETURN and EXTRATERRESTRIAL ENTHUSIAST are correct, they show that the confirmation inquiries we make about our beliefs can be doxastically non-neutral interrogative inquiries in which we do not suspend our judgement.

Jared A. Millson (2020) even holds that any confirmation inquiry is interrogative: If one seeks to confirm a given proposition p, then one is inquiring into whether p is true. To support this claim, he underlines how pairing a confirmation request with the explicit denial of the fact that one is inquiring into whether p results in an odd-sounding expression. For example, consider the following phrase: "I am not inquiring into whether the left kidney needs to be removed, but the left kidney needs to be removed, doesn't it?" All of us can note that the previous phrase sounds odd. Hence, given Millson's perspective, it follows that all of the confirmation inquiries one makes to confirm one's belief that p are interrogative in nature. They exemplify investigations in which one can inquire into a given question without being doxastically neutral and suspending one's judgement.

However, as Falbo's and Woodard's caveat shows, the contrary to Millson's claim is possible: Those who seek to confirm their knowledge that p do not need to be inquiring into whether p is true. Rather, they can be taken as just aiming to confirm that p. Indeed, note that the following possible exchange between Fatima and her resident does not sound off at all:

> Fatima: "Since you are currently studying the patient's file, will you please just give me a quick confirmation that the left kidney needs to be removed?"
> Resident: "Sorry for asking but the operation is in a few hours. Are you still trying to figure out whether the left kidney needs to be removed?"

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> Fatima: "I'm not trying to figure out whether the left kidney needs to be removed. I've already carefully studied the patient's file this morning. I know which kidney to remove. I asked you the previous question because I was just seeking a confirmation to be totally sure before the operation."

By explicating one's confirmatory intent, it appears that the pairing of a confirmation request about p with the explicit denial of the fact that one is inquiring into whether p can be felicitous. Therefore, given these considerations, Millson's principle turns out not to be strictly true and his reasons for supporting it are not totally probative. They cannot be used per se to conclude the existence of confirmation inquiries about one's beliefs that are interrogative and doxastically non-neutral.

Rather, note that Falbo's and Woodard's caveat can even be used to argue that any case that can be proposed to show a confirmation inquiry by which one aims to confirm one's beliefs can be intuitively read in a non-interrogative way: When one seeks to confirm a proposition p one believes to be true, one can be taken as not inquiring into the question of whether p and, therefore, as not really inquiring in an interrogative mode. Namely, one can just be taken as seeking to confirm *that* p is true rather than inquiring into *whether* p is true: One can be taken as just making a *propositional* rather than an *interrogative inquiry*.

For example, reconsider the cases Feldman and Conee (2018) and Archer (2021) propose to argue against Friedman's claim 2) and the normative thesis that one ought not to inquire into a given question when one already believes the answer. In TAX RETURN, when Carla double checks or asks another person to review the return, she can be intuitively seen without any incoherence as just aiming to seek confirmation of her belief that a tax refund is due rather than inquiring into Q_3. Indeed, since she already believes fairly confidently that a small refund is due and, therefore, that "Yes, it is" is the answer to Q_3, she can be taken as not really *inquiring into whether it is true that* a tax refund is due. She might just *seek a confirmation that it is true that* a tax refund is expected as she believes. The same can be said for EXTRATERRESTRIAL ENTHUSIAST. Myles can be intuitively taken as just aiming to confirm his belief that extraterrestrial life exists rather than inquiring into Q_4 when he jumps at the opportunity to join the scientific expedition. Indeed, since he already believes in a justified way that extraterrestrial life exists and, therefore, that "Yes, it does" is the answer to Q_4, he can be taken as not really *investigating whether it is true* that extraterrestrial life exists. He might just *seek a confirmation that* extraterrestrial life exists as he believes.[5]

[5] It is worth noting that another argumentative strategy might be used to argue that cases like TAX RETURN and EXTRATERRESTRIAL ENTHUSIAST do not clearly show scenarios in which one inquires into a given question while lacking the doxastic neutrality in which one has neither belief nor disbelief about which of the possible complete answers is true. Indeed, one might concede that Carla and Myles can be taken as inquiring into Q_3 and Q_4. However, despite this, one might argue that the doxastic state they have in the previous scenarios may not really be a belief: It may be something that falls short of it, like a degree of credence or confidence. Indeed, TAX RETURN can legitimately be read as a case in which Carla needs confirmation by double checking the return or asking someone to review it in order to elevate her degree of credence or confidence to the proper belief that a small refund is due. Moreover, EXTRATERRESTRIAL ENTHUSIAST can legitimately be read as a scenario in which Myles needs to see direct evidence of extraterrestrial life or receive reliable testimony from someone who has

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Therefore, considering this intuitive possibility, it follows that TAX RETURN, EXTRATERRESTRIAL ENTHUSIAST, and the confirmation inquiries we make to confirm our beliefs cannot be taken to clearly and unambiguously exemplify doxastically non-neutral inquiries into questions. Indeed, they can just be intuitively taken without any contradiction as *propositional* rather than as *interrogative investigations*. In other words, from a philosophical point of view, Falbo's and Woodard's caveat shows once again that whether confirmation inquiries about one's beliefs can really be interrogative investigations is something that should be investigated further rather than presupposed in the theory of inquiry: It is more of an *open* than a *settled question*. Given this, it follows that it is also an open question whether the confirmation inquiries we make to confirm our beliefs can really demonstrate doxastically non-neutral interrogative inquiries in which we do not suspend our judgement.[6]

observed such direct evidence to elevate his degree of credence or confidence to the proper belief that extraterrestrial life exists. By appealing to this perspective, a doxastic neutrality defender would have another argument at her disposal to claim that it is not crystal clear that one is actually making a doxastically non-neutral interrogative inquiry in cases like TAX RETURN and EXTRATERRESTRIAL ENTHUSIAST. Indeed, given the previous intuitive reading of the cases, Carla and Myles are inquiring into Q_3 and Q_4 by lacking a proper belief and disbelief about which of the possible complete answers is true because they have something less, like a degree of credence or confidence. See also footnote 8 for another argumentative strategy that employs the idea that, in the cases we analysed in this subsection, one *temporarily* suspends one's judgement and is *temporarily* doxastically neutral while conducting one's confirmation inquiries about one's beliefs or knowledge.

[6] Note that if our considerations are correct, the criticism that uses the possibility of confirmation inquiries aimed at confirming one's belief or knowledge against Friedman's idea of the normative incompatibility of knowledge or belief with inquiry is not totally fair. Indeed, it would be unclear whether cases like EXPERT SURGEON, EXPERT STUDENT, TAX RETURN, and EXTRATERRESTRIAL ENTHUSIAST really exemplify scenarios in which one is legitimately inquiring into a given question Q while believing or knowing the answer. They might be scenarios in which one is legitimately seeking to confirm one's belief or knowledge that p without inquiring into the question, "Is p true?" Therefore, based on our considerations, Friedman's detractors should provide cases in which it is not ambiguous but rather uncontroversial that one is legitimately inquiring into a given question while believing or knowing the answer to make sense of their criticism.

Moreover, it is important to underline that our considerations do not imply that all confirmation inquiries cannot be interrogative. They just question that when we inquire to confirm a proposition p we believe or know to be true, we are really making an inquiry in which we aim to answer the question, "Is p true?" However, they do not say that we cannot inquire in an interrogative mode while we aim to confirm a proposition p for which we have a doxastic state lower than belief, like a degree of confidence or credence. Rather, there are cases in which this intuitively happens. For example, take the case that I have some degree of confidence or credence that it will rain tomorrow, but I do not actually have a full belief about it. Given my doxastic condition, if I inquired to confirm the previous proposition about the weather, it is an intuitive thought that the question of whether it will rain tomorrow would still be open for me and, therefore, that I would inquire by aiming to confirm *whether* it will rain tomorrow rather than just *that* it will rain tomorrow. Namely, in this situation, I would have an answer to the question "Will it rain tomorrow?" that I favour but I do not fully believe and, therefore, I would check to see whether it is the right answer to my question of whether it will rain tomorrow (see Subsection 2.2 for more on interrogative inquiries in which one already favours an answer without believing it). In other words, our considerations do not apply to confirmation inquiries about doxastic stances that are lower than belief. Rather, they put into question whether the confirmation inquiries we make to confirm our belief or knowledge that p can really be interrogative inquiries in which we aim to answer the question of whether p is true (see Section 3 for more on the distinction between interrogative investigations and confirmation inquiries that are just propositional).

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2.2. The Middle State of Inquiry and Hypothesising: Still Doxastically Neutral Interrogative Inquiries

Michele Palmira highlights that some of our inquiries obey a three-stage model:

a) One is open-minded about how to answer the question Q.
b) One is inclined to answer Q in a given way while taking the question to be still open.
c) One closes Q. (Palmira, 2020, p. 4948)

Namely, one can start one's inquiry by being totally neutral about which answer solves one's question. As the information flows, one can favour a certain answer *p* to close *Q*. Finally, one can close one's inquiry when one has established the correct answer.

Palmira argues that the existence of three-staged inquiries shows that it is not true that we always suspend our judgement about a given question when we inquire into it and that we are always doxastically neutral in our inquiries. Specifically, he notes that even if a state of doxastic neutrality as suspended judgement fits well with a) and appears to be the state that opens our inquiries as Friedman suggests, suspended judgement and its doxastic neutrality do not work well with b). Indeed, in this stage of inquiry, he remarks how we display some dispositions that are not proper of those who suspend their judgement and are doxastically neutral, but instead are characteristic of those who have a positive doxastic stance toward what the answer to *Q* is:

> One is disposed to make more effort in checking whether the information and evidence one has so far collected supports closing Q via *p* rather than doing the same checking with respect to other candidate answers; one is disposed to explain away recalcitrant pieces of evidence, as opposed to take them at face value and fall short of retaining *p*; one is disposed to make sure that *p* (rather than other candidate answers) coheres with other relevant well-established Q-related truths. (Palmira, 2020, p. 4955)

However, Palmira adds that even if one displays in b) the dispositions of those who have a positive doxastic stance toward a particular answer, one does not exhibit the dispositions of those who believe it: Being disposed to unqualifiedly assert *p* in the right circumstances and use *p* in theoretical and practical reasoning. Rather, he highlights how these dispositions are more naturally associated with the final stage of inquiry in which one settles one's question. Based on this, Palmira concludes that when one is in the middle state of inquiry, one is in a non-neutral doxastic stance that neither implies suspension of judgement nor belief. He calls this doxastic state "hypothesis" and defines it as follows: "One hypothesises that *p* only if one treats *p* as true for the sake of closing one's inquiry into *Q* via *p*" (Palmira, 2020, p. 4955).

Despite these considerations, I think Palmira's account only partially succeeds in showing doxastically non-neutral interrogative inquiries and does not completely rebut the idea that doxastic neutrality is necessary for our inquiries. Moreover, as I

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will show, one might even resist Palmira's conclusion about 2) and argue that b) is not a suspended-judgement-free stage of inquiry.

To begin with, note that when one accedes to the second stage of inquiry, there are two possibilities:

> b_1) Given the evidence collected and evaluated, one hypothesises that p but does not form any belief or disbelief about which answer settles Q.
> b_2) Given the evidence collected and evaluated, one hypothesises that p and disbelieves a number x of all possible complete answers A, such that $x \neq 0$, $x \neq A$, or $x \neq A{-}1$ because, otherwise, one would be in b_1) or already in c). Indeed, if $x = 0$, one would be in the situation b_1). If $x = A$, one would not hypothesise that p but rather think that there is no possible complete answer to Q. Finally, if $x = A{-}1$, one would disbelieve all the answers except the one hypothesised and, therefore, think to have found the answer.

In the first possibility b_1), when one hypothesises that p, even if one is not neutral because favours one answer over the others and aims to settle Q via p, one still has the doxastic neutrality of those who suspend their judgement. Indeed, one neither believes nor disbelieves one of the possible complete answers. Moreover, given this neutrality that endures from a) to b_1), it appears that one can be taken as being still suspended about which answer settles Q even if one is hypothesising that p. Indeed, if one were asked Q in b_1), the typical answer one might legitimately provide without any incoherence is the following: "I am hypothesising that p. But, *I cannot yet really say* what the correct answer is. Until my hypothesis is explored properly, I must suspend my judgement." Namely, b_1) can be taken as a stage of inquiry in which the inquirer is still suspending her judgement about Q while hypothesising that p. Therefore, given these considerations, b_1) does not show a negation of 3). Moreover, those who defend the necessity of suspension of judgement for our inquiries would not take b_1) as really showing a negation of 2).

Passing to the second possibility b_2), it does show a doxastically non-neutral interrogative inquiry. Indeed, in b_2), while hypothesising that p, one also disbelieves one or more possible complete answers. Consequently, b_2) also shows that we do not entirely suspend our judgement when we inquire in this stage since we judge that some possible complete answers are wrong. Based on this, one can conclude that 2) is wrong and that our inquiries do not need any doxastic neutrality as 3) states.

However, this conclusion might be too quick for those who defend 2) and the necessity of doxastic neutrality for our investigations. Indeed, one might argue that, in b_2), even if one hypothesises that p and disbelieves one or more answers, one would still have a form of doxastic neutrality toward the set of possible complete answers to Q: One would neither believe nor disbelieve any of the remaining possible complete answers. Based on this, those who defend the necessity of doxastic neutrality for our investigations would say that even if 3) is not strictly true, b_2) does not show that we are not doxastically neutral when we inquire. Rather, considering b_2), they might just modify 3) in 3)* and thus restate the necessity of doxastic neutrality for our inquiries: When one inquires into a given question Q,

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one is in a state of doxastic neutrality in which one neither believes nor disbelieves the possible complete answers that one's doxastic state does not rule out.

Moreover, based on 3)*, we can see that there would still be a doxastic neutrality that endures even in the passage from a) to b_2): One still neither believes nor disbelieves the possible complete answers that one's doxastic state does not rule out. But, again, given this neutrality that endures from a) to b_2), one can be taken as being still suspended about which answer settles *Q* even if one hypothesises that *p* and disbelieves some of the possible complete answers. Indeed, if one were asked *Q* in b_2), the typical answer one might legitimately provide without any incoherence is the following: "I am hypothesising that *p* and I already believe that some answers are definitely wrong. But, despite this, *I cannot yet really say* what the correct answer is. Until my hypothesis is explored properly, I must suspend my judgement about it." Namely, b_2) can be intuitively taken as a stage in which the inquirer, since she still cannot say which is the correct answer, is suspending her judgement about *Q* while hypothesising that *p* and disbelieving one or more of the possible complete answers. Therefore, based on this intuitive description, those who defend the necessity of suspension of judgement for our inquiries would not take b_2) as clearly showing a negation of 2).

Finally, it is notable that if b_2) is correctly described as above, then 1) is not strictly correct: It is not true that when one suspends one's judgement about *Q*, one has neither belief nor disbelief about which of the possible complete answers *A* to *Q* is true. Indeed, b_2) shows a scenario in which one suspends one's judgement about *Q* but disbelieves one or more possible complete answers. Nonetheless, it is not a massive issue for those who sustain the doxastic neutrality of suspended judgement. Indeed, they would simply revise 1) in 1)* by taking into account 3)*: If one suspends one's judgement about *Q*, then one is in a state of doxastic neutrality in which one neither believes nor disbelieves any of the possible complete answers one's doxastic state does not rule out.

In conclusion, taking into account the revisions the doxastic neutrality champion can make to defend her position, she might offer the following revised argument to claim the doxastic neutrality of our inquiries into questions:

1)* If one suspends one's judgement about *Q*, then one is in a state of doxastic neutrality in which one neither believes nor disbelieves any of the possible complete answers one's doxastic state does not rule out.
2) If one is inquiring into a given question *Q*, one suspends one's judgement about *Q*.
Therefore,
3)* When one inquires into a given question *Q*, then one is in a state of doxastic neutrality in which one neither believes nor disbelieves any of the possible complete answers one's doxastic state does not rule out. [1, 2, transitivity of implication]

2.3. I Cannot Retrieve My Knowledge! Still Doxastically Neutral Interrogative Inquiries and Occurrent Suspended Judgement

Archer (2018, 2021) has provided some interesting cases against Friedman's normative claim that might be used to argue against 3)*. He proposes scenarios in which

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one legitimately inquires into a given question to find out the answer because one cannot momentarily retrieve one's knowledge of it due to a temporary cognitive impairment.

Here is a case Archer proposes:

> TEST TAKER
> Lisa is taking an open book history of science exam, but has thus far not needed to consult her textbook or notes. Just as she is about to answer a fill-in-the-blanks question asking what year Marie Curie was born (a question for which she both knows and takes herself to know the answer), the invigilator announces that there is only five minutes left. The panic sparked by the invigilator's announcement causes Lisa's mind to suddenly go blank. She knows that if she had enough time to calm her nerves, the answer would come back to her. But time is not a luxury she currently has. Instead of waiting for her eventual recollection, she judges that it would be best to inquire anew and spends the next five minutes frantically leafing through the textbook. Unfortunately, time runs out before she could find the answer. Predictably, as soon as Lisa exits the examination hall, with the feeling of panic now gone, she easily recalls that Marie Curie was born in 1867. (Archer, 2021, p. 107)

Intuitively, TEST TAKER shows that Lisa can legitimately inquire into the question Q_5, "When was Marie Curie born?," despite knowing the answer. Indeed, one can momentarily be unable to retrieve one's knowledge about a given question: Reopening the previous question to inquire into it is a legitimate move. Given this, TEST TAKER also intuitively shows that one can inquire into a given question while having a belief about what the correct answer is. Indeed, by knowing the answer, Lisa also has a belief about it. Hence, TEST TAKER shows that 3)* is not strictly true. Moreover, one could even push the reasoning further and say that since Lisa knows the answer, TEST TAKER shows a case in which one is not really suspending one's judgement about a given question while inquiring into it. Namely, by using TEST TAKER, one might argue that 2) is not strictly true.

However, again, this is not a problematic case for those who defend the necessity of doxastic neutrality for our inquiries. Indeed, by using the notion of *occurrent belief* (Harman, 1986; Lee, 2023), one might recognise that TEST TAKER shows that 3)* is not strictly true but argue that, in a case like TEST TAKER, Lisa has an *occurrent form of doxastic neutrality*. Specifically, one can argue that even if Lisa has the *stored knowledge* and, therefore, the *belief* that Marie Curie was born in 1867, she does not occurrently know and believe it due to her momentary cognitive impairment: Her knowledge and belief are *temporarily off* and not *currently operative* in guiding her thoughts and actions. Indeed, for example, Lisa cannot currently assert that Marie Curie was born in 1867, use this proposition as a premise for her theoretical and practical reasoning, or act as if it were true. In particular, she does not currently think and act based on her knowledge and belief, even if she needs them in the current situation in which she finds herself.[7] Hence, based on TEST TAKER, one might

[7] See Lee (2023) and Gilbert Harman (1986) for more details on how our beliefs can be operative in our thoughts and actions.

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restate the necessity of doxastic neutrality of our inquiries just by slightly modifying 3)* in 3)**: When one inquires into a given question *Q*, one is in a state of occurrent doxastic neutrality in which one neither believes nor disbelieves, in a way that is currently operative in one's thoughts and actions, any of the possible complete answers one's doxastic state does not rule out. In conclusion, those who defend the necessity of doxastic neutrality would end up with the claim Wooram Lee (2023) has recently defended: Those who inquire into *Q* do not have an occurrent belief as to what the correct answer to *Q* is.

Finally, note that based on the occurrent doxastic neutrality Lisa has in TEST TAKER, one might also object that TEST TAKER is a counterexample to 2). Specifically, one might intuitively describe TEST TAKER as a case in which Lisa *occurrently suspends her judgement* because she has her knowledge temporarily off due to the fact that she cannot momentarily retrieve it from her memory. Indeed, if Lisa were verbally asked Q_5, the intuitive answer she could legitimately provide without incoherence would be: "I'm inquiring into it because, even if I know the answer, *I cannot currently tell* it to you. I don't remember it right now. I'm sorry, but I'm forced to temporarily suspend my judgement about the correct answer until I remember it or successfully finish my inquiry." In other words, Lisa can be taken to be in a temporary state of suspension judgement that is operative in her thoughts and actions until her knowledge becomes occurrent again. Clearly, in this intuitive description, TEST TAKER would not be a problem for 2).[8]

3. Explorative Disconfirmation Inquiries

We saw that those who defend the necessity of doxastic neutrality and suspended judgement for inquiry can find multiple ways to rebut the arguments of their critics. Specifically, we saw that the last way to defend their idea is to claim 3)**. In this last

[8] It is worth noting that one might apply 3)** to the confirmation inquiries we discussed in Subsection 2.1 to argue that, even if they might be considered interrogative investigations in which one already has belief or even knowledge of the answer, they still imply an occurrent form of doxastic neutrality and suspended judgement. For example, considering EXPERT SURGEON, Fatima might be intuitively taken as someone who is inquiring into Q_1 and knows its answer but does not have occurrent the correspondent knowledge and belief that the left kidney needs to be removed (Lee, 2023). Indeed, Fatima does not act based on her knowledge and belief to proceed with the surgery, but she prefers to ask her resident for confirmation to rule out the possibility of being wrong. Moreover, given her knowledge, she does not disbelieve that the left kidney needs to be removed and, therefore, not having this disbelief, she cannot have it occurrent either. Finally, we can even imagine that, based on this occurrent doxastic neutrality, Fatima might intuitively respond as follows if asked Q_1: "I know that the left kidney needs to be removed. However, given the delicate situation I am in, I *temporarily suspend my judgement* about it until I confirm my knowledge." Hence, having this possible reading of EXPERT SURGEON, one might say that Fatima is inquiring into Q_1 and has an occurrent form of doxastic neutrality and suspended judgement when she aims to confirm her knowledge and, therefore, belief that the left kidney needs to be removed. In other words, by appealing to 3)**, the doxastic neutrality defender would have available another argument in her repertoire, in addition to the one presented in footnote 5, to argue that the confirmation inquiries we make to confirm our knowledge or beliefs might not be doxastically non-neutral interrogative inquiries. Similarly, those who defend the necessity of suspended judgement for inquiry would have an intuitive case to argue that these confirmation inquiries are not suspended-judgement-free investigations: The inquirer would occurrently suspend her judgement by temporarily putting her knowledge or beliefs on hold until they are confirmed.

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section, I want to provide a case that refutes both 3)** and 2), showing that it is indeed possible to inquire into a given question without doxastic neutrality and suspended judgement.

Consider the following scenario:

> CURIOUS ATHEIST
> Jana is an atheist. Based on her research into atheism, she staunchly believes that the Christian God does not exist and, therefore, that any proof of its existence is ultimately wrong. However, she is very passionate about the problem of God's existence and recognises that her disbelief does not imply per se that it is impossible that there can be real proof of God and, therefore, that God does exist. Appreciating this possibility and based on her passion for the problem of God's existence, she becomes curious as to whether she could really find proof of God that could disconfirm her beliefs and prove herself wrong. She thinks in the private stances of her mind: "I don't believe that there is proof of God that can prove me wrong. But since it is not impossible and the problem of God's existence is intellectually thrilling, let's see whether I can find it." Given this, she inquires into the question of whether she can find proof of God's existence to see whether she can discover an answer that demonstrates that being an atheist is a mistake. Specifically, based on her atheistic belief, when she proceeds in her inquiry and faces a new possible proof of God's existence, she theoretically assumes its falsity and seeks where its fallacies and errors are. She goes on with her inquiry to seek whether there really is any proof that can withstand her presupposition of falsity and be free of errors and fallacies, thus proving herself wrong.

Intuitively, in CURIOUS ATHEIST, we have an agent who is not doxastically neutral toward the set of all possible complete answers to a given question. Indeed, Jana disbelieves that there is a positive answer to the question Q_6: "Can I find any proof demonstrating God's existence?" Specifically, being a staunch atheist, she believes the negative ones: Since God does not exist, any proof of its existence is ultimately wrong. However, despite her doxastic commitments about Q_6, we can see that Jana can be curious and inquire into it. Indeed, she inquires into Q_6 because she finds the problem of God's existence intellectually thrilling and appreciates that her atheistic beliefs do not imply per se that a true proof of God is impossible. Given this open possibility and her intellectual passion for the problem of God's existence, she becomes curious to see whether she can really find herself an answer that can *disconfirm* her own beliefs.

In other words, generalising from CURIOUS ATHEIST, we can appreciate that there exists a kind of investigation we can call "explorative disconfirmation inquiry," which can be described as follows:

4) One disbelieves that there is a positive answer to the question Q, "Can I find proof that demonstrates the proposition p to be true?," because one believes p to be false.
5) One believes the negative answer to Q because one believes p to be false.

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6) One becomes curious about Q because one recognises that one's beliefs in 5) do not exclude per se that it is possible that p is true and that there may be its proof, and one has an intellectual interest in the truth value of p.
7) Based on one's curiosity in 6), one inquires into Q to explore if there is a disconfirmation of one's beliefs in 5).[9]

Considering CURIOUS ATHEIST and 4)–7), this kind of inquiry intuitively shows that one can inquire into a given question without having doxastic neutrality — not even the occurrent variety.

Indeed, in CURIOUS ATHEIST, Jana appears to have an occurrent disbelief that there is a positive answer to Q_6. Specifically, her belief that God does not exist and, therefore, that she cannot really find any proof of God's existence is clearly currently operative in her thoughts and actions when she inquires: It guides what she thinks and does during her inquiry. Expressly, when confronted with any new possible proof of God, since Jana believes that she cannot really find any correct proof that God exists because God does not exist, she immediately theoretically assumes that the new possible proof is incorrect. Moreover, based on her atheistic belief, she tries to identify the fallacies and errors underlying the new possible proof. Therefore, we can see that her disbelief that she can really find any proof of God is currently operative in her reasonings and actions while she inquires: It is occurrent in her inquiry.

Moreover, contrary to what Lee (2023) claims, we can appreciate that this absence of occurrent neutrality does not prevent Jana in CURIOUS ATHEIST from being

[9] One might raise the objection that even if explorative disconfirmation inquiries might well exist, they might be an irrational form of investigation because they might involve a situation of doxastic irrationality. Specifically, one might say that those who conduct an explorative disconfirmation inquiry would believe a conjunction of propositions that might be rationally problematic: "*Not-p*, but *it is possible that p*." For example, we intuitively perceive something as doxastically irrational if someone affirms the following statement to express their beliefs: "The earth is not flat, but it is possible that it is flat." A reason explaining this doxastic irrationality might be that the abundance of evidence for believing that the earth is not flat conclusively excludes or makes extremely implausible the possibility that the earth is flat. Given this, we should not believe that it is possible that the earth is flat but just believe that the earth is not flat. However, despite this particular case, it is not always irrational to believe that *not-p* and that it is possible that *p* at the same time. Rather, it might even be a worthy thing for our doxastic lives. Indeed, our beliefs are not *factive* per se: They might be wrong. Moreover, even if our evidence is good and persuasive at making us believe a certain proposition, it is not always conclusive: It might leave open the possibility that the previous proposition might be false. In other words, regarding our beliefs, we are *fallible*. Given this, apart from cases in which our evidence conclusively excludes a certain possibility, there is nothing doxastically wrong in believing that *not-p* and that it is possible that *p*: It is just the recognition that we are *capable of errors*. Moreover, from an epistemic perspective, this recognition can even be worthwhile in the context of an inquiry: We might discover that, contrary to what we believed, we were wrong and, therefore, correct our epistemic position. Notably, these conditions are what legitimise the explorative disconfirmation inquiry in CURIOUS ATHEIST. Indeed, Jana recognises that her beliefs about God's inexistence and proof are not conclusively and necessarily true — it is possible that she is wrong: It is possible that God exists and that there can be proof of God's existence. Moreover, if she discovers real proof that God exists, contrary to what she believes, she could correct her epistemic position. In conclusion, it might be true that some of our explorative disconfirmation inquiries might be doxastically irrational, given the previous considerations. However, not all of them are doxastically irrational, like the one Jana conducts in CURIOUS ATHEIST.

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curious about Q_6 and from making an interrogative inquiry into it. Indeed, we can note that Jana is not just making a propositional investigation in which, by disconfirming all the possible proofs of God, she aims to further confirm *that it is true that* God does not exist and that she cannot find any proof of its existence. Rather, we can even imagine that Jana in CURIOUS ATHEIST is not making any confirmation inquiry at all about her atheistic beliefs. Indeed, she is a staunch atheist and intuitively might have no need or interest in further confirming her atheist disbeliefs. Instead, what Jana is explicitly doing through her inquiry is putting to the *falsification test* any possible proof of God to see *whether* she can really find the proof her atheistic beliefs leave open as a possibility, which would be a disconfirmation of her own atheistic conviction. Namely, by means of her inquiry, rather than seeking confirmation that her belief is correct by disconfirming all possible proofs of God's existence, Jana is exploring whether she can really find the contrary belief to be right: She is exploring whether she can really find her belief to be wrong. Ultimately, the point of her inquiry is *to investigate whether* a disconfirmation of her atheistic beliefs can be actually found rather than *seeking to further confirm that* they are right.[10]

Specifically, based on her intellectual interest in the problem of God's existence and the possibility that her atheistic beliefs leave open, Jana enters into a kind of *one's-conviction-challenging curiosity,* which is expressed by her statement: "I don't believe that there is a proof of God that can prove me wrong. But given that it is not impossible and the problem of God's existence is intellectually thrilling, let's see whether I can find it." A type of curiosity that is familiar in our lives of inquiring minds: It expresses our volition to see whether someone or something can really prove us and our convictions wrong. This is the type of curiosity that motivates and prompts an explorative disconfirmation inquiry like the one we can find in CURIOUS ATHEIST.

[10] Errol Lord and Kurt Sylvan (Forthcoming) offer a similar case to show that we can inquire into a given question while we are not doxastically neutral. Appealing to a type of compartmentalisation of the mind, they say that we can believe that p on one level and be in an inquiring attitude into whether p on another level to put p and our belief under scrutiny. However, this possibility can just be taken to restate that one is occurrently doxastically neutral when inquiring into a given question. Indeed, in the scenario suggested, one can be simply taken as inquiring into whether p while not having one's belief that p currently operative in one's thoughts and actions: One does not occurrently believe that p. Moreover, Lord and Sylvan equate the previous inquiring attitude with a state of suspended judgement. Based on this and on the previous considerations, their case can just be taken as a scenario in which one occurrently suspends one's judgement about p while inquiring into p: One is temporarily suspending one's judgement about whether p is true or false to put p under scrutiny without the influence of one's belief that p. CURIOUS ATHEIST specifically avoids this type of criticism. Indeed, as we have seen, Jana's belief that she cannot find any proof of God is not temporarily off during her inquiry but rather operative within it — it guides what she thinks and does in her investigation: Whenever she faces a possible proof of God, based on her belief, she presupposes that it is false and tries to identify the fallacies and errors underlining it. Specifically, she put to the falsification test the proofs she faces to see whether she can really find the proof her atheistic beliefs leave open as a possibility, which would be a disconfirmation of her own atheistic conviction. Moreover, as we will see shortly, for the same exact reasons, CURIOUS ATHEIST also shows a case in which one does not occurrently suspend one's judgement about the question one is inquiring into: Jana is not temporarily suspending her judgement by having her belief momentarily off while inquiring into question Q_6.

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Notably, these remarks show how explorative disconfirmation inquiries and the confirmation inquiries we make to confirm *that* our beliefs are correct differ in a relevant respect. In the first, one explores and would put to the falsification test the contrary positions to one's beliefs to see whether one or some of them survive, proving that one's beliefs are wrong. In the second, one would put the possible contrary positions to the falsification test to disconfirm them, thereby further confirming that one's beliefs are correct. Namely, explorative disconfirmation inquiries aim to explore whether there is a disconfirmation of one's beliefs and, therefore, whether there really is *reason to put them into question* or even *abandon* them. Instead, the confirmation inquiries one makes to further confirm that one's beliefs are right aim to *corroborate* or *reinforce* them or *increase one's confidence* in them. Where a *confirmation-seeking investigator* would aim to exclude the possibility of being wrong to further confirm that her beliefs are correct, the *explorative disconfirmation-seeking investigator* aims to explore whether such a possibility can be real to see whether her beliefs can actually be proved wrong. Namely, unlike the first type of investigator, the second does not seek to corroborate or reinforce her beliefs or her confidence in them through her inquiry. Rather, she seeks to find out whether there exists something that can actually do the opposite — put into question her beliefs and, therefore, reduce her confidence in them or even make her abandon them.

Nonetheless, there is an objection one might offer. For example, Lee (2023, p. 1110 claims that if one occurrently believes that *p*, one rules out the possibility that *not-p* from one's perspective. Based on this claim, when one discovers and appreciates that one's belief does not exclude the possibility that it might be false, one loses one's occurrent belief. Therefore, given this, when starting an explorative disconfirmation inquiry, one will be occurrently doxastically neutral about the negative or positive answer as 3)** states.

I do not deny that sometimes the picture offered by this objection is possible. However, I do not think it generalises to any case: The claim that the occurrent belief that *p* requires a sort of current certainty in which one rules out the possibility that *not-p* from one perspective is too strong. For example, I believe that our ordinary world exists, and I appreciate that my belief does not exclude the possibility that I might be wrong. Maybe, there is a Cartesian demon that is deceiving me right now. However, even if I am personally aware of this remote possibility, I continue to fully believe that there is a computer in front of me, that I am in Zurich right now, that my skateboard is at home, and so on. Moreover, these beliefs are currently operative in my thoughts and actions. For example, I use my computer to write this article, take public transport in Zurich to reach my house, think about whether it is better to go home and skateboard or work an extra hour, and so on. Namely, my beliefs about the ordinary world currently guide my thoughts and actions. Apparently, the same happens in CURIOUS ATHEIST. Although Jana appreciates the possibility that her atheistic belief might be wrong, she is still a staunch atheist. Moreover, as we have already seen, she uses her atheistic belief to decide what to think and do in her inquiry: She puts to the falsification test any new proof of God she faces to see whether there can really be one or some that survive, proving her atheistic belief wrong. Namely, her disbelief in God and that she can really

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find proof of its existence is currently operative in her thoughts and actions while she inquires.

Hence, contrary to what Lee contends, these considerations show that it is not necessarily true that just recognising the possibility that our beliefs are not necessarily *factive*, but they might be wrong, makes us lose our occurrent beliefs. Moreover, they rebut the objection that in an explorative disconfirmation inquiry, such as the one Jana makes in CURIOUS ATHEIST, one must be occurrently doxastically neutral because one recognises the possibility that one's belief might be false.

Therefore, we can see that an explorative disconfirmation inquiry like the one we can find in CURIOUS ATHEIST does show that the doxastic neutrality 3)** exemplifies is not needed to inquire into a given question. Moreover, CURIOUS ATHEIST offers a counterexample to 2): Suspension of judgement is unnecessary to be engaged with interrogative inquiries — not even the occurrent variety of it.

Indeed, in CURIOUS ATHEIST, since Jana is a staunch atheist and occurrently doxastically non-neutral about God's existence, she does not *currently* and *temporarily* suspend her judgement at all on the question Q_6 she is inquiring into: She does not currently and temporarily put her belief on hold when she inquires. Rather, she actually believes that she cannot really find any proof of God's existence, and this belief *currently* guides her thoughts and actions in her inquiry. Indeed, Jana utilises her atheistic conviction to judge the proofs of God she faces during her inquiry rather than putting it on hold to pursue a neutral evaluation: She does believe that God's proofs are wrong and, based on this belief, whenever she is confronted with one of them, she presupposes that it is false and tries to identify the fallacies and errors underlining it. Specifically, as we have already described, she puts to this falsification test the proofs of God to see whether she can really find the proof her atheistic beliefs leave open as a possibility, which would be a disconfirmation of her own atheistic conviction. Moreover, given this, it is intuitive to think that if asked whether she can find proof of God, Jana would not provide a *can't-say answer*, suggesting that she is in a state of suspended judgement. Rather, intuitively, her answer would exemplify her belief state: "I believe that I can't. But given that it is not literally impossible, and I find the problem of God's existence intellectually thrilling, I am checking whether there can really be this proof that would prove me wrong."[11]

In conclusion, despite the arguments one can offer to defend the idea that all of our interrogative investigations are doxastically neutral, we can see that inquiries into questions without doxastic neutrality and suspended judgement do exist. The explorative disconfirmation inquiries we can make represent one way to engage in doxastically non-neutral interrogative investigations.

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[11] Notably, considering footnotes 3, 6, and 9, CURIOUS ATHEIST also exemplifies a clear counterexample to the norm Friedman (2019b) proposes: We ought not to inquire into a given question and believe its answer. Indeed, in CURIOUS ATHEIST, Jana does not appear to make any illegitimate inquiry when she believes that she cannot find any proof of God's existence but she inquires into it because she is curious to find out whether she can really find any proof of God that would prove her belief wrong.

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